

PROJECT PROPOSAL

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WORKING TITLE

I went back to the stream, dreaming new reflections

WHAT ARE YOU MAKING?

My goal this year is to produce an installation by remixing media collected from a process-based exchange called “30 Days of Rngiew.”

30 Days of Rngiew

From September 20, 2020 through November 12, 2020, I participated in a daily exchange with Lapdang Syiem, a performance artist. Lapdang and I are from the Khasi indigenous community, with varying degrees of closeness to its traditions. In the exchange, we became barometers of each other’s rngiew.

Rngiew is a core part of Khasi social consciousness. The closest translation into English is aura. It is a force that all things-matter, non-matter, living or non-living- generate. It is witnessed more than it is felt. For the beholder, rngiew presents itself as either solid or soft. Softness can mean generalized misfortune while solidity is a blessing.

I would send Lapdang a 5-second video clip of my face daily, 5 seconds to decrease chances of over-performing. She would respond with audio: “Your rngiew is solid today.” I would then do the same for her. Simultaneously, I began reflecting on this exchange through little poems.

Around the same time, out of boredom, my friend and I were tinkering with Java to make software(a square, a line, etc.). The code would run as an image but had no function. This made me wonder if I could sync the poetry reflection in 30 days of Rngiew into writing code. While making a square with the code: `void setup(){size(1000,1000);}` I added a poem as a comment: “//a square for pictorially enclosing, encasing, mapping transmissions... from another world.” Comments are human-readable. By poetically explaining the intention for the code, I was adding meaning to it.

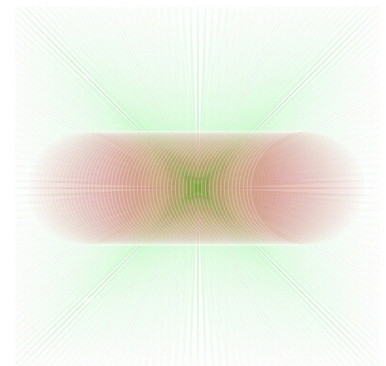
We initially intended on continuing past 30 days by sending videos of hands after October 20. But from November 8 - 12, Lapdang stopped sending videos. As of now (November 14), we have stopped the exchange and will discuss its termination on November 17. Hence, I chose to limit the exchange to a 30-day process-based practice (September 20 through October 20) because it is the most constant.



video files from 30 Days of Rngiew

```
size (1000, 1000);
background(#B1F7FA,1);
strokeWeight (0.1);
fill (#FA5070);
//a square for pictorially enclosing, encasing, transmissions
for (int x=0; x<width; x+=10) {
  ellipse (x, height/5.5);
}
for (int q=0; q<height; q+=10) {
  ellipse (0, q, 5, 5);
  ellipse (width, q, 5, 5);
}
//servers dart from one corner to another, borders of circles like the
edges of grandmother's tea towel, home on the borders
strokeWeight (0.1);
stroke (#3AFA3B);
fill (#CBFFDF, 3);
for (int x=0; x<width; x+=20) {
  for (int z=0; z<height; z+=20) {
    ellipse (x, z, 1, 1);
    line (width/2, height/2, x, z);
  }
}
//energy channels itself from the center, the soul, darting like needles
amid transmission, the point of contact disperses into gradient
stroke (255);
strokeWeight (0.5);
recto (CORNERS);
recto (100, 100, 900, 900);
//an invisible shield, a box to hide and withhold "ka new"... to protect
what is vulnerable, my spirit, in a material world
strokeWeight (0.7);
int c=200;
for (int x=200; x<800; x+=15) {
  line (x, c, x+10, c+10);
}
strokeWeight (0.7);
int f=800;
for (int x=200; x<800; x+=15) {
  line (x, f, x+10, f-10);
}
//as above, so below, all in one place... the spiritual and the material are
both pictorial
fill (#CE2525, 5);
strokeWeight (0.7);
int y=500;
int d=300;
for (int x=200; x<800; x+=10)
{
  ellipse (x, y, d, d);
}
//a slinky goes boinnnggggg...as it depicts the rules of the visible
world and we learn its physical energies
```

sample code with poetic reflections



sample image generated from reflection

HOW DO YOU PLAN TO MAKE THIS?

30 Days of Rngiew produces the following media:

- 60 5-second videos
- 60 audio recordings
- A video recording of Skype discussion about continuing and ending the process from October 20 and November 17 respectively.
- Code with poetry reflecting on the exchange itself
- 30 Images generated by the code

I hope to use all the above media as a reiteration of my existing practice of remixing media (more on this in Relation to Previous Practice section).

Now that the process has officially ended, I have thought of reusing the above media into:

- A website as a published record of 30 days of Rngiew (video, audio, code and image without manipulation)
- Physical Objects: Printing the 30 code-generated images and layering them on acrylic Plexiglas (I have never done this sort of work before, but it is an idea).
- Using the 30 coded images as UV mapped skin for 3D models (at present they are jelly fairies) that can be used in future work.

The project outcome is an installation that is open ended. I don't have a singular project, but an ongoing research narrative that motivates its form.

My research interest for this year considers healing as an art practice. Specifically, healing as a process of contemplation. This came about as I began reconnecting with my indigenous roots. I saw healing as a means of giving agency to my own voice navigating the desire to appropriate Khasi knowledge (folklore, energies, dreams, rumors) through lens-based media, a predominantly western practice with colonial origins.

WHY DO I WANT TO MAKE IT?

The western industrial world feels like it is on crisis mode. A metaphysical crisis button has been switched on. From micro level Zoom fatigue to macro climate catastrophe, logic and binaries of right or wrong are not enough. Healing as a research practice articulates my metaphysical position in the face of this crisis.

Consider 30 Days of Rngiew, the idea occurred when my mother told me to solidify my “rngiew” amidst political turmoil and COVID-19. She meant this as an encouragement. Outside of the personal-social context, rngiew is also tied to Khasi collective reimagination. Soso Tham's Tales of Darkness and Light (1935), an epic length poetic text includes a call for the Khasis to solidify a collective rngiew. This signified the need for confidence to survive the disruption of decolonization. Solidifying rngiew is an innate Khasi form of generating confidence and healing. Bringing this transformative metaphor into my own art practice, I need a research interest in 2020-2021 where I begin to consider healing as a practice.

WHAT IS YOUR TIMETABLE?

MONTH	Project
November	Finish 30 Day Whatsapp exchange with Lapdiang; Upload the videos, audio, code and generated images onto Website
December	Test generated images on Plexiglass (try at least 2, keep receipts)
January	Build 3D Models (currently Jelly Fairies) onto which Images will be UV Map; Upload into website
February through June	End of Thesis Writing Process which informs my idea of the installation and that is ongoing, so I think that informs the making along the way Challenge: With an installation in mind, what more can be remixed from the media and writing at hand

WHO CAN HELP YOU AND HOW?

Lapdiang: 30 Days of Rngiew partner

Aurora Bertoli: coding comrade, spiritual debugging

Ruby Amanze: imagining new forms of making

Kong Esther, Kong Naomi and Kong Occy (Khasi Literature Academics):

Knowledge about rngiew

Simon: Knowledge on anthropology and scriptwriting.

Barend and Javi: The technical bit of video installation production

Natasha: Thesis bookwork and incorporating references

RELATION TO PREVIOUS PRACTICE

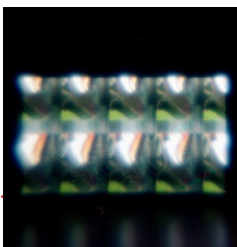
My desire to remix existing media from 30 Days of Rngiew reiterates an already existing media-remixing practice. Last year, my self-directed research produced video and image works through remixing media. Remixing for me is reiterating (sampling) an already existing image (from the internet or my own) into another image, through a lens-based apparatus. This remixing generates a transformation metaphor that can signify a personal change is being dealt with.

Example:

For “DIY Camera: Micro Macro Micro” I built 2 cameras, microscopic and normal. The photographed subject was a phone screen. This idea came about from my relocation to Rotterdam. Relocating often means reorienting myself with constantly checking the Google Maps App, to find the nearest post office, supermarket, and so on. As such, the phone would display a randomly selected satellite location (image below).



This initial satellite-image was also composited and shot with a normal lens to generate the



This recomposited image was then shot with a microscopic lens to generate this image:



This image was then shot by a microscopic digital camera



Formally, this process hinted at an internal reflection: the micro (me) examining the macro (space and place). Having never lived in more than one place for more than 5 years, this examination further generated a video work – Displacement Mandala: All The Places I've Ever Lived. I captured video footage on Google Earth Studio with a virtual camera panning and zooming into places I'd called home. The footage was then layered in editing, with the oldest home of Mowkaiaw in the background and Rotterdam filling the foreground center of the video. This entire process resulted in two distinct projects (one video and one process-based practice) that highlighted the personal context of me reorienting to a new place.

RELATION TO LARGER CONTEXT?

My work is mostly concerned with my ongoing research in:

- Remix culture as part of futurism. I borrow futurism from afro-futurism where cultural liberation emerges from the recombination of artistic, technological and political ambitions. The concept of remixing is a lens through which the oppressed can view themselves in the present and future.

Example: Sondra Perry's *Typhoon Is Coming* where she uses Turner's *The Slave Ship* to generate a video installation to connect digital technology with marginalized identities.



- Denise Ferreira da Silva's collaborative healing practice. She explores healing as an art form, a praxis of sensing and making sense that includes studying, thinking, reading and restoring experiments that reach for the deepest level of our entangled existence.

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Sondra Perry, 'Typhoon coming on', 2018, installation view, Serpentine Sackler Gallery, London. Courtesy: Serpentine Sackler Gallery, London; photographs: © Mike Din

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